

**March 23, 2009**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -- U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) is working to ensure that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has all the resources it needs to care for our nation's veterans. Altmire has sent a letter to the House Budget Committee requesting that it provide the VA with a \$25 billion increase in funding over the next five years. Independent experts and veterans organizations agree that this level of funding is necessary to provide our veterans with the health care and support they deserve.

**“Over the past two years, Congress has made historic gains in providing the VA with the resources it needs to care for and support America’s heroes,” Altmire said. “We now need to build upon these gains so the VA can continue to improve quality of care and reduce the delays veterans often face in obtaining the benefits they have earned. Ensuring the VA has the resources it needs to care for America’s heroes should always be one of our top priorities as we put together the federal budget.”**

In his letter, Altmire also urged the House Budget Committee to start creating budgets that will fund the VA for two years, instead of just one year. This would ensure that delays in Congress' yearly budgeting process did not affect the VA's ability to treat and serve the veterans in its care.

Supporting America's veterans has always been one of Altmire's top priorities. To date, six different pieces of legislation Altmire wrote to help veterans and military families have been signed into law. Altmire's laws will guarantee our wounded warriors receive their full enlistment bonuses, help veterans successfully start and run small businesses, improve treatment for traumatic brain injuries, extend the Family Medical Leave Act to help military families deal with issues arising from deployment, and more.

Over the past two years, Altmire has also helped to provide the VA with an unprecedented \$16 billion increase in funding so it can strengthen health care services, invest in maintenance for VA health care facilities and add 3,500 claims processors to reduce the backlog of claims from veterans waiting for their earned benefits.